

## **Town Meeting Coordinating Committee**

Meeting of Monday, May 16, 2011

Town Hall, Diana Romer Room

**Attendance:** Nonny Burack, Peggy Roberts, Rob Crowner, Adrienne Terrizzi, Mary Streeter; absent: Harry Brooks, Carol Gray.

**1. Call to order:** Peggy calls the meeting to order at 11:13am.

**2. Old business:** No action.

**3. TMCC event evaluations:** Mary states that the new evaluation forms with number ratings and yes/no questions are not providing as much information as previous forms have. Turnout at precinct meetings and the bus tour was a little lower overall than in previous years, probably due to a busier Spring than usual. Adrienne reports that the new precinct lines will not be too much different from current lines.

Reviews of the pre-precinct meeting orientation experiment are mixed: Some were too long and could have been better with multiple presenters rather than one; and some were quick, resulting in a delay until the main meeting started. Rob suggests scheduling a separate precinct meeting for new members, at which orientation matters could be interwoven. Adrienne recalls that the League of Women Voters used to conduct orientation on the first night of Town Meeting, and it was well received. The group agrees that holding orientation in conjunction with the Warrant Review makes for too long an evening, and there are parking problems as well.

Mary would like to survey people about why TMCC events are not well attended in order to figure out how to increase participation. Peggy points out that Town Meeting is not truly representative of town demographics as is; when more is demanded or requested of members, representation further shrinks.

**4. Auditorium facilities:** Adrienne reports that ACTV is aware of and on top of the sound issues that have continued to arise during the first few nights of Town Meeting. There is only so much that can be done to anticipate potential problems, and it is difficult to maintain consistent volume with so many different people speaking, some of whom have speech difficulties.

Adrienne agrees to speak to Ron Bohonowicz about replacing the bulbs in the overhead lights with cooler CFLs. There is also concern about the placement of fans, which are necessary to move the air around but are noisy, and the propping open of doors.

Nonny will contact the police department to make provisions for at least four additional handicapped spaces beyond those already designated in the Middle School parking lot. There may also be insufficient disability seating in the auditorium itself. It is suggested that the Moderator be requested to make an announcement about handicap facilities.

**5. Town Meeting suggestions and concerns:** Nonny reports on anecdotal evidence that vote numbers and possibly dates on tally cards may not be required, suggesting that paper could be saved by printing only one set per person and asking that they be brought to each session of Town Meeting. Provisions would have to be made for those who arrive without tally cards for any reason and some way of ensuring that Town Meeting members continue to check in each night despite not needing to pick up tally cards. Any tally card system that is used requires vigilance on the part of the tellers. The committee will raise this issue in its meetings with the Town Clerk and Town Moderator this summer.

The committee discusses issues related to recognition of speakers on the floor of Town Meeting, including the use of colored cards to indicate preference, stacking, auditorium lighting (which may be hindering vision), and ways of distributing the microphone. Nonny mentions that the old Town Meeting Study Committee considered creating the position of moderator assistant or parliamentarian, but it is

acknowledged that power dynamics would be a factor in moving forward with this suggestion. Peggy states that such a position was informally filled by Janet Dakin for many years. The committee will explore with the Moderator whether it can help facilitate the ordering and recognition of those who seek to speak at Town Meeting.

The committee discusses the perennial debate over Town Meeting members' participation in budget decisions, both at Town Meeting and leading up to it. A suggestion had been posted to the listserv about delaying voting on motions to amend the budget in order to adequately respond to them. Adrienne suggests holding a "town hall" meeting on budget priorities early in the process, possibly as TMCC's Fall informational forum. Rob suggests bringing an article to Fall Town Meeting to vote on priorities. The committee discusses how to effectively influence financial priorities and decision-making. There are management and political considerations. The evolution from "gang-of-four" to JCPC and BCG, the role of the Finance Committee, and the selection of Finance Committee members are important pieces of the puzzle. The committee agrees to resume this discussion at a future meeting.

**6. Posting meetings:** The town is still adjusting to the new Open Meeting Law requirements. Currently, agendas must be submitted 72 hours in advance of a meeting, which sometimes makes it difficult to compile a detailed agenda. In addition, TMCC does not have a staff liaison to assist it in communicating with the Town Clerk. The IT department has made it possible to post meetings electronically, but TMCC has not yet been trained in the procedure.

**7. Minutes of previous meetings:** Tabled.

**8. Future meetings:**

**9. New business:** The committee advises Mary to send a warning to a member of the discussion listserv who posted an offensive message rather than taking the step of banishing him.

**10. Adjournment:** The meeting is adjourned at 1:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Crowner

Documents provided:  
1. agenda